Homegoing Celebration of Willie Frank Easter

Sunrise: January 17, 1945 *Sunset: October 25, 1997*

Services Held
Thursday, October 30, 1997 11:00 a.m.
McGlothen Temple Church of God in Christ
1443 Filbert Street, Richmond, California 94801

Officiating
Elder Frank Dayce, Pastor,
Mt. Olive Church of God in Christ, Richmond, California

Reverend Joseph K. Flowers, Pastor,
Friendship Missionary Baptist Church, Vallejo, California

Precious Memories & Thoughts
Celebration of Willie Frank Easter's Life
Homegoing Celebration Order of Service

Homegoing Celebration
Order of Service

Prelude ..... Sister Nita Turner

Processional ..... Clergy & family

Master of Ceremony ..... Elder Frank Dayce,
Pastor, Mt. Olive Church of God in Christ, Richmond

Congregational Song ..... "In the Morning When I Rise"

Scripture Reading ..... Old Testament ... Psalms 121 ... Elder Jackie Hilliard,
Pastor, Hebrews12:14 C.O.G.J.C.

New Testament ... St. John 14 ... Elder Tony Brown

Invocation ..... Elder Gary Muccular

Solo ..... Sister Chrishenda Cooper
"He Knows How Much We Can Bear"

Words of Encouragement ..... Deacon Charles Owens,
Deacon, Friendship Missionary Baptist Church, Vallejo

Elder Cornell Robinson,
Pastor, Joshua C.O.G.J.C., Richmond

Elder Samuel Bobo, Sr.,
Pastor, Queen Memorial C.O.G.J.C., Oakland

Superintendent Booker Turner,
Pastor, Corinthian C.O.G.J.C., Vallejo

Resolutions ..... Sister Linda Dayce

Special Tribute ..... Friendship Missionary Baptist Church, Vallejo

Solo ..... Sister Zettie Gooden

Expression ..... 2 minutes please ..... Family & Friends

Acknowledgement of Cards & Telegrams ..... Evangelist Diane Williams

Obituary ..... Sister Delores Murray

Solo ..... Minister Amos Carter
"My Soul Is Anchored In The Lord"

Eulogy ..... Reverend Joseph K. Flowers,
Pastor, Friendship Missionary Baptist Church, Vallejo

A Glimpse 'til Glory ..... Fuller Staff in Charge

Recessional ..... Clergy, Family & Friends

Interment
Rolling Hills Memorial Park
Richmond, California

Precious Memories & Thoughts
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The Celebration of Willie Frank Easter's Life

"For since we believe that Jesus died and rose again, even so God will also bring with Him through Jesus those who have fallen asleep [in death]. . . . . Therefore encourage one another with these words" (Thessalonians 4:14-18 AMP).

Elder Kelly & Mother Lily Easter Sr. were the proud parents of five children but much to their surprise, God had not finished blessing them. Twelve years after their fifth child's birth, their last child, Willie Frank Easter, was born on January 17, 1945, in Waldo, Arkansas.

The Easter family moved to Richmond, California, in 1951. They united with the Pentecostal Church of God in Christ under the leadership of Elder Durrey Haynes, Sr. The church was later renamed Mt. Olive Church of God in Christ. Willie Frank accepted the Lord as his personal Savior at an early age. He was an active member on the Usher Board and was choir director of the Children's Choir. Willie Frank loved to tell stories of how he would tell Mother Easter that he couldn't go to church on the week nights because he had too much home work. Mother Easter would tell him that church was the best place to do his homework. Frank said he would have to go to church six nights out of the week. "Train up a child in the way he should go: and when he is old, he will not depart from it" (Proverbs 22:6 KJV). Elder & Mother Easter took this verse to heart and made sure that Willie Frank was raised in a way that would be pleasing to God. The family later united with Powerhouse Church of God in Christ where Willie Frank continued to faithfully serve under the leadership of Elders William Hill and Asberry Scott.

Willie Frank was educated in the Richmond School District and after graduating from Richmond High School in 1963, he started working for Marwais Steel Company in Richmond, California where he remained for over thirty-two years until the plant closure in March, 1996. Willie Frank was currently employed by Bio-Rad Laboratories of Richmond, California. Though his tenure at Bio-Rad was short, there was a mutual respect and admiration he shared among his co-workers.

Willie Frank recommited his life to Christ and faithfully served at New Gethsemane Church of God in Christ, Richmond, California under the leadership of Superintendent Archie Levias. He later reunited with the Mt. Olive Church of God in Christ under the leadership of Elder Frank Dayce. Although he was ever willing to serve, Willie Frank never sought a place of prominence. He did everything requested of him, as unto the Lord, but his spirit of genuine humility followed the example of his Lord, making him willing to do the humblest tasks as well as important ones, doing both well, but not seeking recognition for the same. Willie Frank truly loved his Lord, serving in many Christian capacities, and it is a small wonder that his unselfish and cooperative nature made for him many friends. Willie Frank had a passion for photography and was frequently called upon to take pictures for the various important events in the church and in people's lives.

Willie Frank met Gwendolyn Jackson in the early spring of 1965. He was Gwen's Senior Ball and Graduation date. They married on November 20, 1965 in Carson City, Nevada. Their only child, Kelley Roshan, was born to this union. Willie Frank and Gwen's marriage and lives endured many peaks and valleys and eventually, they took separate paths. They were each subsequently married to and divorced from second spouses. During Willie Frank's second marriage, a daughter, Twanya Lanae, was born. During the next twenty years Willie Frank & Gwen both realized that their friendship was more important than their differences and they became true friends. By 1990, their daughter, Kelley, who had become a beautiful young woman and who believed in the power of prayer, earnestly started praying that her parents would be reunited in marriage.

In September, 1991, both Gwen and Frank were invited to the 50th Wedding Anniversary of Mr. & Mrs. Tommie Dickens. Willie Frank asked Gwen to attend the affair with him. Not realizing that this was a Divine intervention, Gwen said "yes". This was the first time Gwen and Frank had gone any place together in almost 20 years. They had a great time. They both felt as though they had never been apart. In the ensuing months, they realized that even though they had allowed Satan to come into their marriage and pull them apart, God had allowed them to learn through life experiences what marriage should and should not be and how they should love, respect and encourage one another in a marriage. God protected them, guided them, saved them and brought them back together. They were reunited in Holy Matrimony on June 6, 1992. The following statement was printed in their marriage program:

"We are totally committed to keeping God as the head of our lives,
to honor, love and cherish one another until death do us part.
For this we give God all the praise, for He has done great things for us."

In His own way and for His own purpose God has reached down into His garden to pluck one of His fairest flowers. On Saturday afternoon, October 25, 1997, while surrounded by the people who loved him, God called the spirit of our beloved Willie Frank home to be with Him throughout eternity. Willie Frank was preceded in death by his parents, Elder Kelly and Missionary Lily Easter Sr., his brother, Talmaldge Easter and two sisters, Goldie Douglas and Jimmie Faye Zackery. Willie Frank leaves to "celebrate his life & homegoing", his beloved wife, Gwen Easter; his daughters, Kelley Roshan, Twanya Lanae and Stacie Easter, his brother and sister-in-law, Elder Kelly and Ruth Easter Jr. of Seattle, Washington; one sister, Sylvia Townsel of Richmond; his God-Mother, Ruth Yarbrough of Richmond; his mother-in-law & father-in-law, Lloyd & Ellis Richardson of Oakland; his confidante, special friend and niece, Zettie Lee Gooden of Richmond and a host of relatives and friends.

". . . . The Lord gave, and the Lord has taken away;
blessed [praised and magnified in worship] be the name of the Lord!" (Job 1:21 AMP).

Thoughts from Gwen . . .

On May 19, 1997, Frank was diagnosed with cancer. The bottom fell out of my world. I was gripped with fear. This was the man I was going to grow old with. How could this be happening to us. God had allowed us to be reunited in marriage. I didn't believe He only meant for us to have 5 years, 4 months, 2 weeks and 5 days together.

My father-in-law, Elder Kelly Easter, Sr., was the nicest man I ever met in my life. In the twenty years that Frank and I were apart, Frank turned into his father. Frank was kind, gentle, peaceful, loving and generous. He was very easy to love again. Frank always looked for the good in any situation. When Frank was told that he had cancer, his faith in God never wavered. He believed that his cancer was a test and that God would heal him. But he also said that if God chose not to heal him in life , it would be God's Will, and he knew he would be healed in death.

Frank has shown us what true courage is. During his illness and treatments, he never complained. He always had a positive spirit. Frank continued to work until his body just physically gave out. He would not allow any tears or negativity around him. I had to ask God to release the fear from me, to increase my faith and to give me peace in this situation. God honored my request.

God also put loving and wonderful people in our lives. We have a great support system. When we couldn't go any further, our family and friends would step in and carry us while we regrouped. I thank God for all of the mighty prayer warriors. I want to especially thank Elder Cornell & Missionary Maxine Robinson for their faithful and vigilant ministering to us at home and in the hospital; to my sister, Sandra Rhodes, Delores Murray & Levi Hill, Leatrice, KaSandra & Kim Knox, Dolores & Edward Ford, Ruth Yarbrough, Roy Inglemon, Johnnie Cole, Wanda Williams, Henry & Chrishenda Cooper, Adrienne & Ken Best and Zettie Lee Gooden, for doing whatever it took to keep us going.

I'm a member of Friendship Missionary Baptist Church in Vallejo. Frank had a special relationship with my church. He wasn't a member but he supported my work and the activities of my church. I want to take this opportunity to thank my church family and especially Deacon Charles Owens, who faithfully brought Frank his communion on the first Sunday of each month and who constantly inquired about him and called him. That meant a lot to Frank.

The last person I want to thank is my pastor, Reverend Joseph Flowers. When the doctors told me on Wednesday, October 22, 1997, that the end was near for Frank, I called Reverend Flowers immediately. He came immediately and spent many hours comforting and ministering to all us at the hospital, including family and friends.

Frank had stopped speaking on Thursday night, accept for a few words. On Saturday morning, October 25, 1997, around 5:30 a.m. Frank was very restless and agitated. With Praise music in the background, I soothed him down and told him how much I loved him. He said,"I love you too". Kelley was asleep but she heard his voice and asked me what her dad had said. I told her and she got up and came to his bed and said to him "Hi Poppy." He said "Hi baby". Those were his last words. Kelley and I both told Frank how much we loved him, that we would be o.k. and that it was alright for him to go. We read bible scriptures to him and prayed and yes, we cried. Reverend Flowers got to the hospital early. He came in and hugged and encouraged each of us. He started ministering to Frank immediately. He talked to him, read scripture, rubbed him, prayed and sang to him. Reverend Flowers ushered "my baby" through his transition into glory. And when his work was finished with Frank, he ministered to all of us as we had never experienced before. The Holy Spirit was present. All of Frank's loved ones came in and said good-bye. Reverend Flowers and Chrishenda sang solos. There was a sweet calming spirit present. Frank's death was as he lived, quiet and peaceful. Frank had to leave me. I would not have chosen any other way for him to go. Because of Frank's peaceful transition, Kelley and I and all of the family have drawn strength. We have peace and the assurance that we will see Frank again. I thank God for my Pastor. He is truly anointed.

I have been unconditionally loved by a man who also was my best friend. I loved that man. We were a great balance for each other and we made a great team. I thank God for these last six years. We were there for each other and that's the way it was suppose to be. I will be forever grateful to God for my life with Frank.

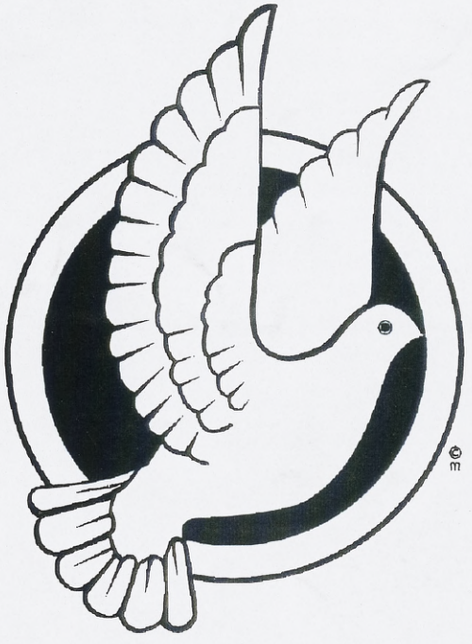
I love all of you for your support and for all of your acts of kindness. "The Lord bless you and keep you; The Lord make His face shine upon you, And be gracious to you, The Lord lift up His countenance upon you, and give you peace" (Numbers 6: 24-26 NKJV).

4E 71
ALEX HALEY'S
BOYHOOD HOME
Will Palmer, a prominent Henning businessman, built this house in 1918-19. Palmer's grandson Alex Haley lived here from 1921 to 1929 and later spent many summers with his grandparents. It was on the porch that he heard the stories told by his grandmother and aunts which inspired him to write his 1976 Pulitzer Prize-winning book Roots. Millions of Americans watched an eight-part television adaptation the following year.

Active Pallbearers

Leroy Dickens
Edward Ford
Levi Hill

Jerome Holmes
Roy Inglemon
Curtis Yarbrough



"Peace I leave with you, my peace I give unto you: not as the world giveth, give I unto you. Let not your heart be troubled, neither let it be afraid" (St. John 14:27 KJV).

Acknowledgment

The family appreciates every expression of sympathy and each act of kindness to express your concern and love. Thank you very much.
Gwen Easter and Family

Arrangements Entrusted to
FULLER FUNERALS INC.
3100 Cutting Blvd.
Richmond, California 94804
Telephone (510) 234-5473

GAE works

Twenty years ago
my parents' lives took separate paths
but through prayer and the grace of God
P. Kelley Roshan Easter
invite you to worship with us and witness
the re-marriage vows of my parents
Gwendolyn Anitris Easter
and
Willie Frank Easter
Saturday, the sixth of June
nineteen hundred and ninety-two
at four o'clock in the afternoon
Friendship Missionary Baptist Church
1905 Florida Street, Vallejo, California

Reception immediately following ceremony
Richmond Memorial Auditorium Lobby
26th & Nevin Avenue Richmond, California